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tions, sulphuric acid and copper will make copper sulphate, and I can experiment and test it, and doubtless it is necessary for me to do so before I can lay claim to real knowledge. But if some one thence concluded that, "You have made sulphuric acid and copper make copper sulphate"—as though otherwise they would have made something else—"and therefore your judgment has made itself true"—such a statement of the case would seem to me the purest of verbal fallacies, a play on different senses of the word "make." Yet this is exactly the result to which the ingenious dialectic of Professor Dewey seems to lead.

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THE PLACE OF METAPHYSICS

TIT is regrettable that Professor Warbeke in his comments¹ on my article on "Methodological Teleology"² declines to enter upon the important questions I had endeavored to raise, such as the relation of methods to metaphysics, of values to facts, of axioms to postulates, and merely tries to exculpate himself from certain animadversions he finds in my paper.³ He does indeed state that metaphysics are

¹ This JOURNAL, Vol. XVII., p. 120.

² Ibid., Vol. XVI., p. 505.

³ I had mentioned, incidentally, in a footnote (p. 550), that his accounts of me were inaccurate and not to be trusted, and instance that he had misrepresented me (1) as demanding the "abrogation" of the law of contradiction, and (2) as identifying "true" and "useful." He replies to (1), but not to (2), by quoting (at unnecessary length) from the context of the passage he referred to, but not, unfortunately, the two sentences immediately preceding the one he had attacked. As however he does (this time) quote it directly, he reveals that I had *never* said that the law of contradiction "demands its own abrogation," but had merely remarked that it *seemed* to, and moreover that in the next sentence I had described this view as a "paradox." That ought, I suppose, to satisfy me. On the other hand it seems odd to say that his selections from me were "discussed under the head: 'Contradiction—as a Principle of Being, Either Meaningless or False; as a Principle of Thought, Self-contradictory.'" For these headings are *not* from the text (as any one would suppose), but from the index (which is not by me), and they refer also to a later discussion (p. 131-2), in which the proper meaning of contradiction is worked out and the "paradox" is cleared up. It is difficult to believe that if Professor Warbeke had looked up this second passage, he would not have perceived that the view he was attacking was not mine, even if he had read the first too cursorily to notice the words "seem" and "paradox." I am sorry to say also that his quotations from my article in this JOURNAL leave much to be desired. Thus he quotes a passage (XVI., p. 551) in which I argued that the alleged "teleological constitution" of the world was *only a methodological assumption*

(or may be?) for him hypotheses, and even gives (p. 122) what may be taken as a sort of definition of metaphysics as a "systematic effort to coordinate our most general assumptions into logical coherence." But upon closer inspection all his dicta seem to me too vague or ambiguous to form good starting-points for a discussion of the place of metaphysics in the *corpus* of the philosophic sciences: it will be better to approach this difficult question by casting a glance backwards over the history of this notion.

1. Metaphysic commenced its career, in Plato, as a way of discovering (absolute and ultimate) Truth by talking to young men. The younger, the better.⁴ It was accordingly called *Dialectic*. When no young men were handy, or they got bored and went away, the philosopher might also claim the license of thinking aloud, and his "Dialectic" became "the soul's converse with itself."⁵ In either case, Dialectic was the highest human pursuit, and no doubt was entertained of its capacity to attain to ultimate reality and absolute certainty. It was the sole guarantee of the "hypotheses" of all the sciences.

2. In Aristotle it changes its name, rather than its nature. In fact it gets two names—"first philosophy" and "theology." They are not perhaps as complete synonyms as Aristotle supposed. It makes a difference whether we conceive metaphysics as *the science of the first principles* which are common to all the special sciences, or as *ontology*, the science of $\tau\circ\delta\nu\gamma\circ\nu$, which contemplates pure Being and Form undefiled with Matter. Moreover the two conceptions develop differently in the sequel.

3. After Aristotle, his editors took up the problem of placing metaphysics. After mature consideration they solved it, in a non-committal, but somewhat mechanical, way, by putting the writings on first philosophy *after* those on physics! And "metaphysics" they have remained ever since.

But only verbally. The meaning concealed behind the word has continued to vary and waver, and is still in dispute. Particularly as regards the relation of metaphysics to the sciences, which were steadily accumulating masses of truth hardly to be ignored altogether, even by the most obstinate metaphysician.

Formally there appeared to be a choice between three alternatives and moreover one *all* philosophies had to use; but he omits the reference to methodological assumptions and my quotation marks round "teleological constitution"; so that an unsuspecting reader would ascribe the phrase to me instead of to him! In the next quotation also (p. 122) he has substituted the notoriously tricky word "presupposed" for my "supposed."

⁴ Cf. *Parmenides*, 137 B.

⁵ Cf. *Sophist*, 263 E.

tives. (a) The sciences might be declared dependent on metaphysics, either wholly, as by Plato (*Republic*, VI), partially and in so far as they resorted to "common axioms," as by Aristotle. But though in Plato's time it might seem possible to represent the sciences as awaiting the sanction of metaphysic and as indebted to it for the validation of their principles, their enormous development and steady progress during the last 2,000 years, when contrasted with the vagaries and unprogressiveness of the metaphysics, practically exclude this conception of their relations.

It is (b) more plausible, conversely, to conceive metaphysics as depending on the results of the sciences, and as attempting their final systematization. Clearly this makes metaphysics the *locus* of the final *problems* of knowing and being, and puts them *last*, not first, on the scientific programme. Also it tends to make them problematic, provisional and empirical.

(c) This of course was abhorrent to the rationalistically-minded, who have always claimed to be the true metaphysicians. So, while abandoning the claim to universal empire over the sciences, they endeavored to maintain at least the *independence* of metaphysics.

For this purpose metaphysics had to be equipped with a distinctive *subject-matter* and a distinctive *method*. "Being as such," "ultimate reality," and a variety of "absolutes" appeared to supply the former; "pure thought," "reflection" or "analysis" might be represented as the latter. As regards the former, the assumption common to all metaphysics was that their object could be taken as known or knowable; as regards the latter, that their method was non-empirical and unaffected by the changes which the sciences were continually effecting in the ideas they operated with.

Hence it was a serious blow to this conception of metaphysics when the question was raised how we *come to know* the reals we believe in. For it meant the dethronement of "ontology." Kant was not the first to raise this issue, but he did so most successfully; perhaps because he was not very radical, and shrank from questioning the belief in the *method* of rationalism, and, even in depriving the metaphysician of his transcendent objects, showed that his heart bled for him and still hankered after what his head had been forced to reject: at any rate he persuaded rationalists, in words at least and for a time, to recognize some of the most obvious difficulties in their position.

On the other hand it is clear that the scope of Kant's "Copernican Revolution" is limited. It applies only to such metaphysics as claim to be purely *a priori* and final systems of ultimate reality; it leaves unaffected the provisional syntheses that are willing to be

progressive guesses at truth, based on the conclusions of the sciences. These may continue to decorate themselves with the title of "metaphysics," if they value it.

It is clear also that his conception of philosophic method remains purely rationalistic. Though Kantian epistemology dethroned the old metaphysical dynasty, it only represented a younger branch of the same august family. Hence actual Kantism never cut at the roots of rationalist metaphysics, and could be followed by the remarkable reaction known as "post-Kantian idealism," the most extraordinary orgy of metaphysical speculation the world has ever witnessed, which the national pride of the German professoriate contrived to impose on the other professors as a normal and valid development of the human mind.

So two really valuable implications of the Kantian "Revolution" were obscured. The first was that it was legitimate, nay necessary, to raise questions prior to the ontological question—what is real?—because the real for us has always to be a knowable real, and epistemology thus becomes the logical presupposition of any metaphysic. This renders a frontal attack on the real impossible: it can yield its secrets only to a formal siege in which the differences made by *our knowledge of the real* are systematically estimated.

Moreover the question of knowledge did not, upon further investigation, appear to be the most ultimate of all. For knowing turned out to be a purposive process, and its course and character seemed to be largely determined by the devices and interests that inspired it, the ends it arrived at, and instruments it forged to compass them. Now this seemed to complicate questions of metaphysics with those of personal psychology on the one hand, and with questions of ethics on the other. For the traditional name for the end was the "good," and the Greeks had conceived the science of conduct as the search for the supreme end; if then all knowing depended on a "good," and all being on knowing, did not the good condition being? Thus the supreme science of metaphysics seemed to be subordinated to the special science of ethics.⁶ But in reality it was to introduce a new question into philosophy, that of *Value*, and to imply that all judgments about the real are, as a matter of fact, value-judgments, since they have been selected and preferred by a purposive process of thought. Now the recognition of *Value* is the only philosophic topic

⁶ I have myself repeatedly been censured on this account, and particularly for calling an Ethical Society Address *The Ethical Basis of Metaphysics*. The title was of course a conscious paradox, and was intended to express weariness with the pretensions of metaphysicians to make that support others which could not even support itself. But if it is objected to, I am quite willing to withdraw my "ethical basis," and to leave metaphysics in the air.

of first-class importance which can be said to have originated between the rise of Criticism and of Pragmatism. It is also the only one which can be said to have originated in Germany. It is post-Kantian and post-Hegelian, but its origins are obscure and its development is not yet complete. On metaphysics its effect is enormously to lengthen the approach to ultimate reality. For it complicates the question of what the real *is* with the question of how our various interests and ends, attitudes and prejudices affect our ways of *reaching* it. Our interests seem so various that these complications seem infinite, and so variably do their effects help or hinder that their influence ceases to be rationally calculable and becomes merely empirical.

So, though attempts have of course been made to arrive at valuations that can be represented as stable, universal and absolute, the growing prominence of the value problem has tended to reinforce the empirical attitude towards metaphysics. This attitude had already been fostered by the criticism of the rationalist and the Kantian conceptions of philosophic method.

It was pointed out, as against the former, that the distinctive method claimed by metaphysics did not exist. No thought was ever "pure," either in the sense that it was not stimulated by experience, or in the sense that it was not actuated by psychological interest in its thinker.

Neither were "reflection" and "analysis" methods that could be operated without regard to experience. No doubt they did not require capacious laboratories and costly apparatus. The philosophical professor could sit at ease in his chair, and perform these thought-experiments. Nor did the marvels of "reflection" and the acumen of "analysis" overtly presuppose any empirical observation. But both procedures were apt to become arbitrary and uncritical. You "reflected," in the light of prejudices that were unseen and unrecognized. You "analysed," but not the notions whose ambiguities you were preparing to exploit. In the end it seemed questionable whether anything was achieved but a fuller consciousness of the meaning of the words reflected on and analysed. And even this result was obnoxious to the double objection, (1) that this meaning is acquired and embodies merely what has been found out about the objects named, and (2) that it is not fixed, but changes as our knowledge grows. So that even if the metaphysicians had agreed to fix their technical terminology—and their lawless individualism rendered this impossible—it would have been rendered obsolete by the progress of the sciences. Decidedly neither "reflection" nor "analysis" could provide metaphysics with a distinctive method.

The *a priori* method of Kant seemed at first more promising. But it rested on two weak assumptions. The first was that the survey of the epistemological field had been exhaustive, and that consequently the Kantian analysis of the implications of knowledge was not merely one out of many, but *the* only one that would stand. The second was that in consequence it could be argued that knowledge must imply an *a priori*, if it contained what was *not* "empirical," and that this *a priori* must be Kant's, because his was the sole and final one.

However neither of these assumptions proved tenable. It appeared that, so far from exhausting the possibilities of thought, the Kantian epistemology merely took over and tinkered the "atomistic" psychology of Hume and his passivist conception of experience. Nor had it any positive arguments wherewith to commend itself. It could only reiterate that it was the only alternative to Hume. But it wasn't. It was not a "necessity of thought" to assume an *a priori* structure of thought according to the Kantian pattern. Indeed Kant admitted as much, by admitting practical postulates into a corner of his system. It thereby became legitimate to conceive the "*a priori*" voluntaristically, as composed of postulates, tested by being acted on, in the hope of their proving valuable, instead of intellectually, as (unintelligible) facts of mental structure. Actually this alternative interpretation of the *a priori* worked much better; but whether this was admitted or not, the mere fact that it was possible completely invalidated all arguments based on the assumption that the only alternatives were either a sensationalist or an apriorist intellectualism, and that to confute either of these *ipso facto* established the other.

If however "axioms" were simply successful postulates, and if postulates might begin their scientific career as wishes or as methodological fictions, it was clear on the one hand that man was left free to try *any* assumption he was willing to act on, and on the other that the function of experience in sifting and sanctioning human assumptions was really important. The secular controversy between rationalism and empiricism was in danger of being settled voluntaristically, by a compromise that repudiated neither human activity nor the value of experience.

The effect of this new development in epistemology on the position of metaphysics, was further to support the empirical conception of their relation to the sciences. For it now seemed as if all principles must be essentially experimental, while the sort of working appropriate to metaphysical principles became precisely that which was attested by scientific use. Moreover the voluntarist conception

of principles had a further effect. It affected the way in which the reals of metaphysics were regarded. It was no longer necessary, or even rational, to regard them as final. It was easier, safer, and in the end more convenient to regard them as hypothetical, provisional, and subject to revision whenever occasion arose. Thus even "ultimate reality" was only ultimate up to date, even "first principles" were only first because it was not yet convenient to relegate them to a secondary place.

Scientifically this had the effect of rendering relatively unimportant the question about ultimate reality. It emancipated science both from metaphysical dictation and from superstitious respect for "facts" that were after all relative to the state of the science that recognized them, and left it free to operate in any way that promised to be advantageous. "Facts," like "principles" ceased to be *ontological*, and became methodological, conceptions.

Do we thus finally arrive at a complete subjection of metaphysics to the sciences? Can metaphysical systems do nothing but reflect the vicissitudes of scientific opinion, and ruminate the precious truths cast before them? Is "metaphysics" merely the label for the unsolved, and probably insoluble, problem of a complete synthesis of all that is known?

By no means: if only metaphysics will take themselves seriously and honestly face the duties imposed on them by their definition, they too may emancipate themselves from external control and be free to become an integral function of life. If we define, as the duty of metaphysics, the complete synthesis of all the data of knowledge, we *must* include among them those data which are provided by the strictly personal portions of our experience. For it is of *his* experience as a whole that each one of us demands a synthesis, and to eliminate the personal part would be to mutilate the whole. It is true that the sciences (except individual psychology and some sorts of ethics) appear to abstract from personality and to standardize man before they treat him scientifically. But the facts often force them to recant and to rescind their abstraction. Thus the astronomer finds that he has to ascertain the "personal equation" of his observers. And the physicist prides himself on a great discovery, when it turns out that even in mechanics there is "relativity" and that he *can not* ignore the space and time of the observer.

If therefore metaphysics are to hope to make good their claim to be all-embracing, they must *both* include the results of the sciences and *also* dispense with the fictitious simplifications by which the sciences are wont to facilitate their task. While this makes metaphysics harder, it also emancipates them, and in a way satisfies their

craving for a distinctive object and a distinctive method. The object is all experience, personal as well as scientific, and the method is to evaluate the latter in the light of the former, until the conflicting purposes and principles of the sciences are interpreted into a harmony. Of course the task is difficult, and it is not surprising that so far metaphysicians have not had any signal success.

It should be clear then that there are metaphysics and meta-physics. If we insist on conceiving them as dogmatic systems of obligatory, absolute and final truth, the same for every one and for all time everywhere, we may have to class them among the persistent illusions of the human mind. But if we consider them as pragmatic hypotheses to round off our life withal, to be based upon the best knowledge available and to be changed accordingly, we may find them subjectively satisfactory to ourselves, and not devoid of interest and (at least) esthetic truth for others. But the two conceptions are so different as to render it a matter of some importance to make it clear *which* of them we mean when we speak of "metaphysics."

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THE BASES OF CROCE'S LOGIC. A CRITICISM

CROCE'S *Logic* is concerned, as every true logic ought to be, with knowledge in its entirety, although he has, from his own point of view, chosen to dichotomize his system into *Logic* and *Aesthetic*; it is quite justifiable therefore to ground criticism on general epistemological principles, and I have adopted this position throughout the following remarks.

1. He begins his treatment of the "pure concept," which is the true object of logic, by assigning a *cognitive* activity to sensation¹—a principle which it is essential always to keep in mind. It is certainly an unusual way of regarding sensation and departs considerably from current epistemological and psychological usage, but it is not on that account alone unjustifiable, provided, that is, that it is consistently adhered to and all its implications accepted. Its obvious defect in Croce's hands is that it limits the sphere of thought at the outset by regarding a very extensive range of intellective activities—those *i. e.*, which he allocates to cognitive sensation—as taking place prior to any operation of thought itself;² and thus a

¹ "Sensation must be conceived as something cognitive, as a cognitive act," *Logic*, p. 3.

² Thought refers back to sensation as its antecedent," *ibid.*